

Chapter 5



USFWS

Planning team meeting

Consultation and Coordination with Others

Introduction

This chapter describes how we included others in developing this draft CCP and EA and how we plan to continue consulting and coordinating with others in the future. It details how we first invited, and will continue to encourage, the partnership of other Federal and State agencies, civic, public, and private conservation and education organizations, and the affected public in our decisions about managing the Refuge.

It does not detail the dozens of informal discussions the refuge manager and his staff have had over the last two years where the CCP was a topic of conversation. Those involved a wide range of audiences, including congressional representatives or their staffs, local community leaders and other residents, refuge neighbors, refuge visitors, and other interested individuals. During those discussions, the refuge manager and his staff often would provide an update on our progress and encourage comments and other participation.

According to Service policy, we must review and update our final CCP at least once every 15 years, or sooner, in response to significant new information that would markedly change management direction or, our Director or Regional Director deem it necessary. If so, we will once again announce our revised planning and encourage your participation.

Planning to Protect Land and Resources

The current refuge planning effort began six years ago but was interrupted so that CM Complex and Regional staff could focus on completing the CM Complex CCP EA, which was issued as a final CCP/EA in September of 2006. The earlier planning efforts were as follows:

- September 2001:** CCP kickoff meeting held at the Refuge with members of the Refuge staff and Regional Office. Visitor Service evaluation conducted.
- October 2001:** Sent a letter to the State Director asking that two members of his agency join the Core Planning Team. Held biological and public use workshops to help draft vision and goal statements and identify issues.
- June 11, 2002:** Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register. Mailed workbooks to mailing list.
- June 2002:** Held public scoping meetings in nearby communities of Rock Hall, Chestertown and Centreville
- July-August 2002:** Compile comments from workbooks and public meetings.
- October 2002:** Briefing at RO for Region 5 NWRS Chief.
- Spring 2003:** a letter was sent to everyone on the project mailing list indicating that due to changes in personnel and regional priorities, the project was being put on hold
- August 2006:** Resumed planning project
- August 31 to September 1, 2006:** Held a planning team meeting at the refuge
- November 8, 2006:** Hosted a biological experts' workshop to facilitate a discussion on natural resource priorities for the refuge. Twenty-five experts attended, representing other federal

agencies, state agencies, researchers and national and private non-governmental conservation organizations. The participants identified resource priorities such as migrating and wintering waterfowl, federal and state-listed species, shallow water habitats, and healthy and diverse habitats, free of invasive plants.

December 2006:

Distributed a newsletter to all those on the refuge CCP mailing list notifying everyone that the planning process was restarted.

January 17, 2007:

Held a public information open house meeting to discuss our renewed planning efforts. We also published a Notice of Intent to re-initiate preparation of a comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment in the Federal Register.

September 2009:

Issued a Federal Register Notice regarding the availability of the draft CCP/EA. Held a public meeting and open house to discuss the draft CCP/EA and to gather public input and comments.

**Partnerships Involved
in Planning and/or
Refuge Projects**

Refuge programs enjoy a great deal of popular support. Program partnerships have developed in many ways, and exist in every arena of refuge management, from weekly waterfowl surveys to the running of the Visitor Center and Bookstore by the Friends of Eastern Neck.

As public interest in protecting the refuge's resources has grown, additional partnerships among the Service, States, and other agencies have also developed. Our opportunities for ever greater partnerships now encompass an array of community organizations and individuals, some of whom appear below.

- American Legion of Rock Hall
- Chesapeake Alliance
- Chesapeake Paddlers Association
- Chester River Association River Keepers
- Friends of Eastern Neck
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Department of the Environment
- Maryland Energy Administration
- National Aquarium in Baltimore
- National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Kent County Bird Club
- Kent County Dept. of Parks and Recreation

■ Kent County Dept of Tourism

■ Kent County Roads Dept

Under the 1997 Refuge Improvement Act, we must review and update our plan at least once every 15 years, or sooner, should our Director deem it necessary. At that time, we will once again announce our planning for its revision, and once again request your participation.

Contact Information

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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